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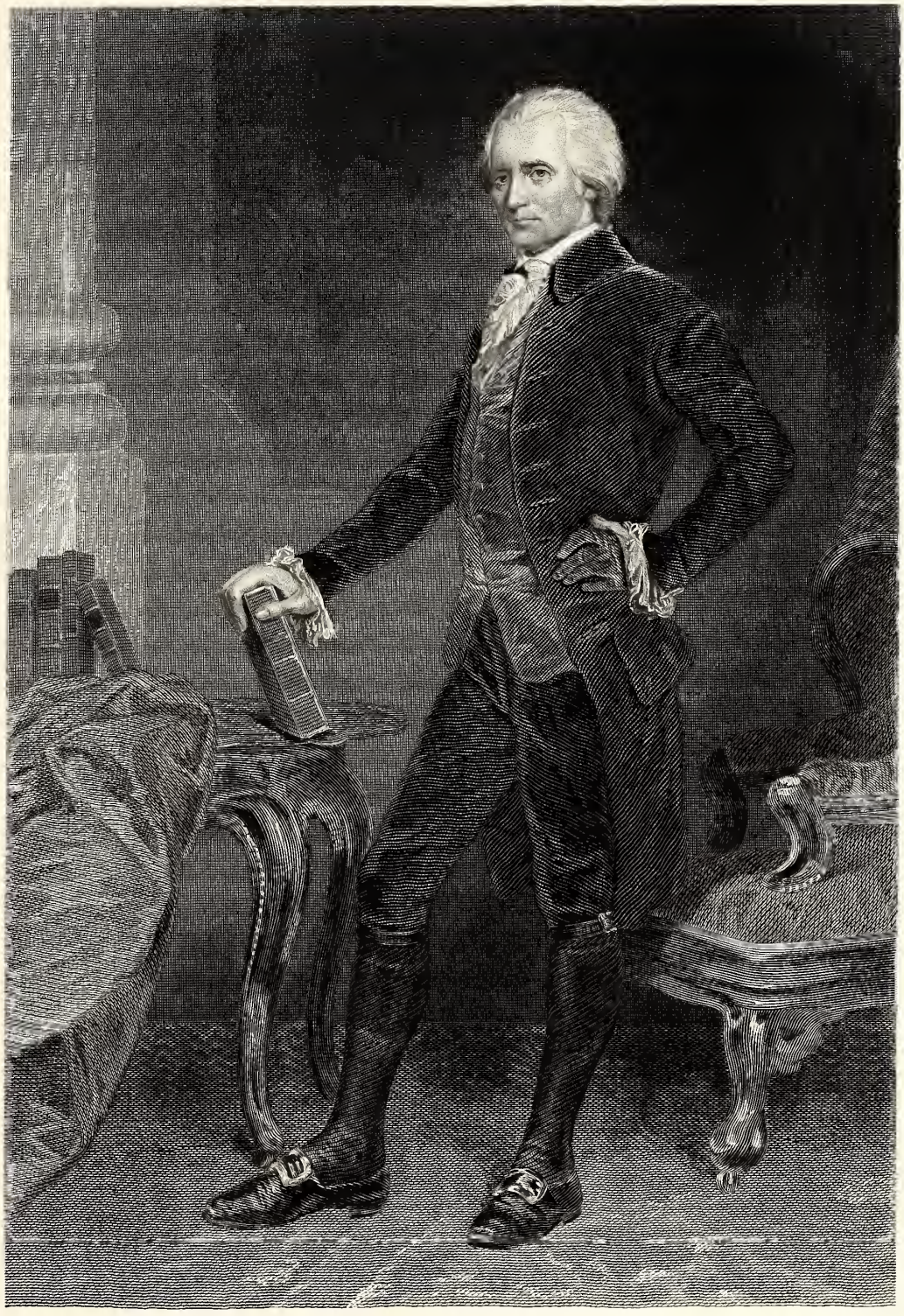

Richard Penn Lee

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Parliament with a power which may terminate in our destruction. The great bulwarks of our Constitution we have desired to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable means; but your ministers, equal foes to British and American freedom, have added to their former oppressions an attempt to reduce us by the sword to a base and abject submission. On the sword, therefore, we are compelled to rely for protection. Should victory declare in your favor, yet men trained to arms from their infancy and animated by the love of liberty, will afford neither a cheap nor easy conquest. Of this at least we are assured, that our struggle will be glorious, our success certain; since even in death we shall find that freedom which in life you forbid us to enjoy."

The business of the Congress wore on; Lee was active on its committees; there were negotiations of war, and conferences with commanders: it was time for the country to avow what she was doing, and proclaim herself an independent nation. To Lee again fell the post of honor. He was the mover of the resolution, June 7, 1776: "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

The resolution was debated with great earnestness the next day, in speeches by Lee and John Adams, who had seconded it. Dickinson, Livingston, and others, who still thought the movement premature, were in opposition. The question was adjourned on the tenth to the first day of July, and a committee, consisting of Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston, was appointed to draw up, in the meantime, a Declaration of Independence. It is said that Lee, according to parliamentary usage, would have been chairman of this committee, in place of Jefferson, had he not been suddenly called home by the illness of his wife. The declaration was adopted before his return. Jefferson consoled his absence by forwarding to him the original draft of this great paper with the amended copy adopted by Congress. "You will judge," Jefferson writes, "whether it is the better or worse for the critics." [1]

Lee shortly returned to Congress, and became immersed in its more important duties; but in the summer of the following year he was compelled by ill health to retire. He was again elected in 1778, again retired in 1780, and again returned in 1784, when he was chosen President of that body. In the intervals of service, he was employed in the Assembly of his native State. In 1787, he was once more in Congress, where he served on the committee which reported the "Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States Northwest of the Ohio," with the provision precluding slavery and involuntary servitude otherwise than in punish-

[1] This original draft appears printed in the Appendix to the Memoir of Lee.

ment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.

The Convention at Philadelphia had, meanwhile, adopted the Constitution, and Lee voted in Congress for submitting it to the people. He was, however, a zealous opponent of its acceptance, and in his own State took part with Patrick Henry in opposition to it. It was by Henry's intrigue that he was sent under its provisions to the Senate of the First Congress in place of Madison. He then took an active part in the amendments of the Constitution, which were supposed to check its "consolidating" tendencies. In 1792, debilitated in health, he resigned his seat in the Senate, and finally retired from public life. He had fought for ten years against the gout with great resolution; but it gained the mastery at last, and put an end to his life at his seat, Chantilly, in Westmoreland, in his sixty-fourth year, June 19, 1794.

The mental characteristics of Lee may be summed up in an eminent turn for parliamentary life. He was, as we have seen, constantly employed in public affairs, always looked to on occasions of moment, and ready to serve alike in the councils of his State and his country. To a talent for the business of committees he united eloquence in debate. He spoke readily with ease and correctness, in pleasing accents, suggesting to his admirers the milder enthusiasm of Cicero by the side of the Demosthenic rage of his companion, Patrick Henry. His figure was tall, his features were commanding. He was graceful in gesture, though he had lost the use of one hand, in early life, by an accident from a gun in sporting.

It is his glory to have written his name in legible characters on some of the most memorable pages of American history. The man selected to address the people of Great Britain on the eve of the Revolution, to give the first instructions to General Washington, to propose the initial resolution of the Declaration of Independence, is not likely to be forgotten.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Washington Irving commences his life of George Washington with a genealogical chapter tracing the antiquity of his family to the eleventh century. Though the transcendent merit of his hero little needs this blazonry, which, as he himself intimated on one occasion, his occupation in active business had given him no time to ferret out, yet it is not to be denied that it is quite in harmony with the character of Washington, that his family should be traced through an ancient and honorable descent. He is placed in history as a connecting link between too great eras of civilization, and it is important to know that the goodly tree of his fair fame has its roots in the one, while it extends its widely spread, still growing branches into the other. He certainly would be less a representative man were his origin unknown, or had he just arrived, a chance comer, to do his work of revolutionizing a nation. On the contrary, he was especially fitted for his great employment by the place of his birth, leaning fondly on the parent country as the Old Dominion, the estates and institutions by which he was surrounded, and the recollections of an elder time which these circumstances implied. In supplying these traditions, Mr. Irving carries us back to the picturesque era of the early days of the Plantagenets, when the De Wessyng tons did manorial service in the battle and the chase, to the military Bishop of Durham. Following these spirited scenes through the fourteenth century to the fifteenth we have a glimpse of John de Wessyngton, a stout, controversial abbot attached to the cathedral. After him, we are called upon to trace the family in the various parts of England, and particularly in its branch of Washingtons—for so the spelling of the name had now become determined—at Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire. They were loyalists in the Cromwellian era, when Sir Henry gained renown by his defence of Worcester. While this event was quite recent, two brothers of the race, John and Lawrence, emigrated to Virginia in 1657, and established themselves as planters, in Westmoreland county, bordering on the Potomac and Rappahannock, in the midst of a district destined to produce many eminent men for the service of a State then undreamt of. One of these brothers, John, a colonel in the Virginia service, was the grandfather of Augustine, who married Mary Ball, the belle of the county, and became the parent of George Washington. The family home was on Bridges' Creek, near the banks

of the Potomac, where, the oldest of six children by this second marriage of his father, the illustrious subject of our sketch was born on the twenty-second of February, 1732.

Augustine Washington was the owner of several estates in this region of the two rivers, to one of which, on the Rappahannock, in Stafford County, he removed shortly after his son's birth, and there the boy received his first impressions. He was not destined to be much indebted to schools or school-masters. His father, indeed, was not insensible to the advantages of education, since, according to the custom of those days with wealthy planters, he had sent Lawrence, his oldest son by his previous marriage, to be educated in England; an opportunity which was not given him in the case of George; for before the boy was of an age to leave home on such a journey, the father was suddenly taken out of the world by an attack of gout. This event happened in April, 1743, when George was left to the guardianship of his mother. The honest merits of Mary, "the mother of Washington," have often been matters of comment. All that is preserved of this lady, who survived her husband forty-six years, and of course lived to witness the matured triumphs of her son—he was seated in the Presidential chair when she died—bears witness to her good sense and simplicity, the plainness and sincerity of her household virtues.

The domestic instruction of Washington was of the best and purest. He had been early indoctrinated in the rudiments of learning, in the "field school," by a village pedagogue, named Hobby, one of his father's tenants, who joined to his afflictive calling the more melancholy profession of sexton—a shabby member of the race of instructors, who in his old age kept up the association by getting patriotically fuddled on his pupils' birth-days. The boy could have learnt little there which was not better taught at home. Indeed we find his mother inculcating the best precepts. In addition to the Scriptures and the lessons of the Church, which always form the most important part of such a child's education, she had a book of excellent wisdom, as the event proved, especially suitable for the guidance of her son's future life, in Sir Matthew Hale's "Contemplations, Moral and Divine"—a book written by one who had attained high public distinction, and who tells the secret of his worth and success. The very volume out of which Washington was thus taught by his mother is preserved at Mount Vernon. He had, however, some limited school instruction with a Mr. Williams, whom he attended from his half brother, Augustine's, home, in Westmoreland, and from whom he learnt a knowledge of accounts, in which he was always skilful. His ciphering book, neatly written out, may be seen among other relics of his early years, in the public archives at Washington. Another juvenile note-book of this time, penned when he was thirteen, contains not only forms of business as bonds, leases, and the like, but copies of verses and "Rules of Behavior in Company and Conversation," full of homely practical wisdom of the Benjamin Franklin

pattern. Some lines on "True Happiness" recite, among other benefits, those of

> "A merry night without much drinking,
> A happy thought without much thinking;
> Each night by quick sleep made short,
> A will to be but what thou art."

The "Rules," one hundred and ten in number, are plain, sensible maxims, commonplace enough, some of them, but not the less valuable; minor moralities which add to the comfort as well as the greatness of life, form the gentleman, and assist the Christian. Washington, who was ever sedulously observant of all matters of good conduct and high principle, may well be studied in this elementary exercise of his boyish days. He had early set his mind in these precepts upon kindness, forbearance, self-denial, probity, the love of justice. The youth had also particular instructions from Mr. Williams in geometry, trigonometry, and surveying, in which he became an adept, writing out his examples in the neatest and most careful manner. This was a branch of instruction more important to him than Latin and Greek, of which he was taught nothing, and one that he turned to account through life. All the school instruction which Washington received was thus completed before he was sixteen.

Nor let it be supposed that these sober mathematical calculations constituted all the dreams of the boy. He had other visions of a softer character in the charms of a certain lowland beauty, to whose memory some love-sick rhymes are left in his youthful note-books. It is worth mentioning, this tender susceptibility of one who was all tenderness within, while his grave public duties so long conscientiously required him to present an iron front to the world.

He had, however, to look to some practical work in the scant condition of his fortunes, and we find him early bent upon it. While he was yet at school, a proposition was entertained by himself and a portion of his family, which, if it had been carried out, might have seriously affected the destinies of America. His brother, Lawrence, fourteen years his senior, had served a few years before with the West India fleet of Admiral Vernon, in the land force at the siege of Carthagena, and in honor of his commander, gave the name Mount Vernon, to the estate on the Potomac which he inherited from his father. He was now married to the daughter of a neighboring gentleman, William Fairfax, and in the enjoyment of his home had given up military life; but he thought well of the foreign service, and procured a midshipman's warrant for his brother George, who, full of active vigor, with a boyish taste for war, eagerly desired the adventure. Little more is known of the affair, beyond his mother's earnest final interposition—she had given her consent in the first instance—by which his majesty's navy lost an excellent recruit, and his majesty's dominions half a continent, while the world gained a nation.

On leaving school, young Washington appears to have taken up his residence with his brother at Mount

Vernon, where he was introduced to new social influences of a liberal character in the family society of the Fairfaxes. Lawrence, as we have seen, was married to a daughter of William Fairfax, a gentleman of much experience and adventure about the world, who resided at his neighboring seat "Belvoir," on the Potomac, and superintended, as agent, the large landed operations of his cousin, Lord Fairfax. These comprehended a huge territory, embracing the Northern Neck, and stretching over the mountains into what was then something of a frontier region, the valley of the Shenandoah. In this more remote spot resided the owner himself at Greenway Court, keeping up a rude state, and gratifying his love of the chase, for he had brought with him from Old England the tastes of a genuine fox-hunter. Washington, though too young to appreciate the eccentric nobleman's varied experience, was ready to follow him in the hunt, and there was another source of sympathy in the practical management of his vast territory. Surveys were to be made to keep possession of the lands, and bring them into the market; and who so well adapted for this service as the youth who had made the science an object of special study? We consequently find him regularly retained in this service. His journal, at the age of sixteen, remains to tell us of the duties and adventures of the journey, as he traversed the outlying rough ways and passages of the South Branch of the Potomac. It is a short record of camp incidents and the progress of his surveys for a month in the wilderness, in the spring of 1748; the prelude, in its introduction to Indians and the exposures of camp life, to many rougher scenes of military service, stretching westward from the region.

Three years were passed in expeditions of this nature, the young surveyor making his home in his intervals of duty mostly at Mount Vernon. The health of his brother, the owner of this place, to whom he was much attached, was now failing with consumption, and George accompanied him in one of his tours for health in the autumn of 1751 to Barbadoes. As usual, he kept a journal of his observations—he was always diligent and exact in these records from a boy, so that of no one so illustrious in history have we a more perfect picture through life—which tells us of the every-day living and hospitalities of the place, with a shrewd glance at its agricultural resources and the conduct of its governor. A few lines cover nearly a month of the visit; they record an attack of the smallpox, of which his countenance always bore some faint traces. Leaving his brother, partially recruited, to pursue his way to Bermuda, George returned in February to Virginia. The health of Lawrence, however, continued to decline, and in the ensuing summer he died at Mount Vernon. The estate was left to a daughter, who, dying in infancy, the property passed, according to the terms of the will, into the possession of George, who thus became the owner of his memorable home.

Previous to this time, rumors of imminent French and Indian ag-

gressions on the frontier, began to engage the attention of the colony, and preparations were making to resist the threatened attack. The province was divided into districts for enlistment and organization of the militia, over one of which Washington was placed, with the rank of major, in 1751, when he was but nineteen—a mark of confidence sustained by his youthful studies and experience, but in which his family influence, doubtless, had its full share. We hear of his attention to military exercises at Mount Vernon, and of some special hints and instructions from one Adjutant Ware, a Virginian, and a Dutchman, Jacob Van Braam, who gave him lessons in fencing. Both of these worthies had been the military companions of Lawrence Washington in the West Indies.

In 1753, the year following his brother's death, the affairs on the frontier becoming pressing, Governor Dinwiddie stood in need of a resolute agent, to bear a message to the French commander on the Ohio, remonstrating against the advancing occupation of the territory. It was a hazardous service crossing a rough, intervening wilderness, occupied by unfriendly Indians, and it was a high compliment to Washington to select him for the duty. Amply provided with instructions, he left Williamsburg on the mission on the last day of October, and, by the middle of November, reached the extreme frontier settlement at Will's Creek. Thence, with his little party of eight, he pursued his way to the fork of the Ohio, where, with a military eye, he noted the advantageous position subsequently selected as the site of Fort Du Quesne, and now the flourishing city of Pittsburg. He then held a council of the Indians at Logstown, and procured guides to the station of the French commandant, a hundred and twenty miles distant, in the vicinity of Lake Erie, which he reached on the 11th of December. An interview having been obtained, the message delivered and an answer received, the most hazardous part of the expedition yet lay before the party in their return home. They were exposed to frozen streams, the winter inclemencies, the perils of the wilderness and Indian hostilities, when Indian hostilities were most cruel. To hasten his homeward journey, Washington separated from the rest, with a single companion. His life was more than once in danger on the way, first from the bullet of an Indian, and during a night of extraordinary severity, in crossing the violent Allegany river on a raft beset with ice. Escaping these disasters, he reached Williamsburg on the 16th January, and gave the interesting journal now included in his writings as the report of his proceedings. It was at once published by the Governor, and was speedily reprinted in London.

The observations of Washington, and the reply which he brought, confirmed the growing impressions of the designs of the French, and military preparations were kept up with spirit. A Virginia regiment of three hundred was raised for frontier service, and Washington was appointed its Lieutenant-Colonel. Advancing with a portion of the force of which he had

command, he learnt that the French were in the field, and had commenced hostilities. Watchful of their movements, he fell in with a party under Jumonville, in the neighborhood of the Great Meadows, which he put to flight with the death of their leader. His own superior officer having died on the march, the entire command fell upon Washington, who was also joined by some additional troops from South Carolina and New York. With these he was on his way to attack Fort Du Quesne, when word was brought of a large superior force of French and Indians coming against him. This intelligence led him, in his unprepared state, to retrace his steps to Fort Necessity, at the Great Meadows, where he received the attack. The fort was gallantly defended both within and without, Washington commanding in front, and it was not until serious loss had been inflicted on the assailants that it surrendered to superior numbers. In the capitulation the garrison was allowed to return home with the honors of war. A second time the Legislature of Virginia thanked her returning officer.

The military career of Washington was now for a time interrupted by a question of etiquette. An order was issued in favor of the officers holding the king's commission outranking the provincial appointments. Washington, who knew the worth of his countrymen, and the respect due himself, would not submit to this injustice, and the estate of Mount Vernon now requiring his attention, he withdrew from the army to its rural occupations. He was not, however, suffered to remain there long in inactivity. The arrival of General Braddock, with his forces, in the river, called him into action at the summons of that officer, who was attracted by his experience and accomplishments. Washington, anxious to serve his country, readily accepted an appointment as one of the General's military family, the question of rank being thus dispensed with. He joined the army on its onward march at Winchester, and proceeded with it, though he had been taken ill with a raging fever, to the Great Crossing of the Youghiogany. Here he was compelled to remain with the rear of the army, by the positive injunctions of the General, from whom he exacted his "word of honor" that he "should be brought up before he reached the French fort." This he accomplished, though he was too ill to make the journey on horseback, arriving at the mouth of the Youghiogany, in the immediate vicinity of the fatal battle-field, the evening before the engagement. In the events of that memorable ninth of July, 1755, he was destined to bear a conspicuous part. From the beginning, he had been a prudent counsellor of the General on the march, and it was by his advice that some of its urgent difficulties had been overcome. He advised pack-horses instead of baggage-wagons, and a rapid advance with an unencumbered portion of the force before the enemy at Fort Du Quesne could gain strength; but Braddock, a brave, confident officer of the European school, resolutely addicted to system, was unwilling or unable fully to carry out the sugges-

tions. Had Washington held the command, it is but little to say that he would not have been caught in an ambuscade. It was his last advice, on arriving at the scene on the eve of the battle, that the Virginia Rangers should be employed as a scouting party, rather than the regular troops in the advance. The proposition was rejected. The next day, though still feeble from his illness, Washington mounted his horse and took his station as aid to the General. It was a brilliant display, as the well appointed army passed under the eye of its martinet commander on its way from the encampment, crossing and recrossing the Monongahela towards Fort Du Quesne—and the soldierly eye of Washington is said to have kindled at the sight. The march had continued from sunrise till about two o'clock in the afternoon, when, as the advanced column was ascending a rising ground covered with trees, a fire was opened upon it from two concealed ravines on either side. Then was felt the want of American experience in fighting with the Indian. Braddock in vain sent forward his men. They would not, or could not, fight against a hidden foe, while they themselves were presented in open view to the marksmen. Washington recommended the Virginia example of seeking protection from the trees, but the General would not even then abandon his European tactics. The regulars stood in squads shooting their own companions before them. The result was an overwhelming defeat, astounding when the relative forces and equipment of the two parties is considered. Braddock, who, amidst all his faults, did not lack courage, directed his men while five horses were killed under him. Washington was also in the thickest of the danger, losing two horses, while his clothes were pierced by four bullets. Many years afterwards, when he visited the region on a peaceful mission, an old Indian came to see him as a wonder. He had, he said, levelled his rifle so often at him without effect, that he became persuaded he was under the special protection of the Great Spirit, and gave up the attempt. Braddock at length fell in the centre of the field fatally wounded. Nothing now remained but flight. But four officers out of eighty-six were left alive and unwounded. Washington's first care was for the wounded General; his next employment, to ride to the reserve camp of Dunbar, forty miles, for aid and supplies. Returning with the requisite assistance, he met the wounded Braddock on the retreat. Painfully borne along the road, he survived the engagement several days, and reached the Great Meadows to die and be buried there by the broken remnant of his army. Washington read the funeral service, the chaplain being disabled by a wound. Writing to his brother, he attributed his own protection, "beyond all human probability or expectation," to the "all-powerful dispensations of Providence." The natural and pious sentiment was echoed, shortly after, from the pulpit of the excellent Samuel Davies, in Hanover County, Virginia. "I may point," said he, in illustration of his patriotic purpose of encouraging new recruits for the ser-

vice, in words since that time often pronounced prophetic, "to that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

One lesson of this campaign was deeply impressed upon the mind of Washington, the disobedience, disorder and cowardice of the regular troops compared with the heroic fate of the Virginia companies. He expresses himself in the strongest terms of this "dastardly behavior of the regular troops, *so called*," in his correspondence at the time, and the experience, doubtless, remained with him in after days of doubt and difficulty when the conviction was needed to sustain him against hostile hosts.

The public attention of the province was now turned to Washington, as the best defender of the soil. His voluntary service had expired, but he was still engaged as adjutant, in directing the levies from his residence at Mount Vernon, whence the Legislature soon called him to the chief command of the Virginia forces. He stipulated for thorough activity and discipline in the whole service, and accepted the office. The defence of the country, exposed to the fierce severities of savage warfare, was in his hands. He set the posts in order, organized forces, rallied recruits, and appealed earnestly to the Assembly for vigorous means of relief. It was again a lesson for his after life when a greater foe was to be pressing our more extended frontiers under his care, and the reluctance or weakness of the Virginia Legislature was to be reproduced, in an exaggerated form, in the imbecility of Congress. We shall thus behold Washington, everywhere the patient child of experience, unwearyingly conning his lesson, learning, from actual life, the statesman's knowledge of man and affairs. He was sent into this school of the world early, for he was yet but twenty-three, when this guardianship of the State was placed upon his shoulders.

We find him again jealous of authority in the interests of the service. A certain Captain Dagworthy, in a small command at Fort Cumberland, refused obedience to orders, asserting his privilege as a royal officer of the late campaign, and the question was ultimately referred to General Shirley, the commander-in-chief at Boston. Thither Washington himself carried his appeal, making his journey on horseback in the midst of winter, and had his view of his superior authority confirmed. A bit of romance also has been connected with this tour on public business. At New York he was entertained by a friend in Beverley Robinson, of a Virginia family, who had married one of the heiresses of the wealthy landowner of the Hudson, Adolphus Philipse, the proprietor of the manor of that name. Mrs. Robinson had a sister equally wealthy with herself, young and beautiful, of whom it was said Washington, who was by no means insensible to female charms, and who had also a prudent regard for fortune, became enamored. Indeed, his admiration, says Mr. Irving, is "an historical fact." The story is some-

times added, that he sought her hand and was rejected, but this the excellent authority just cited discredits as improbable. Urgent public affairs called the gallant officer to new struggles in the wilderness, and the lucky prize passed into the arms of a brother officer of Braddock's staff.

Returning immediately to Virginia, Colonel Washington continued his employment in active military duties, struggling not less with the inefficient Assembly at home, whom he tried to arouse, than with the enemy abroad. It was a trying service, in which the commander, spite of every hardship which he freely encountered, was sure to meet the reproach of the suffering public. The disinterested conduct of Washington proved no exception to the rule. He even experienced the ingratitude of harsh newspaper comments, and thought for the moment of resignation; but his friends, the noblest spirits in the colony, reassured him of their confidence, and he steadily went on. The arrival of Lord Loudoun, so pleasantly satirized by Franklin in his Autobiography, as commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces, seemed to offer some opportunity for more active operations, and Washington drew up a memorial of the affairs he had in charge for his instruction, and met him in conference at Philadelphia. Little, however, resulted from these negotiations for the relief of Virginia, and Washington, exhausted by his labors, was compelled to seek retirement at Mount Vernon, where he lay for some time prostrated by an attack of fever.

In the next spring, of 1758, he was enabled to resume his command. The Virginia troops took the field, joined to the forces of the British general, Forbes, and the year, after various disastrous movements, which might have been better directed had the counsels of Washington prevailed, was signalized by the capture of Fort Du Quesne. Washington, with his Virginians, traversed the ground whitened with the bones of his former comrades in Braddock's expedition, and with his entry of the fort closed the French dominions on the Ohio. The war had taken another direction on the Canadian frontier in New York, and Virginia was left in repose.

Shortly after this event, in January, 1759, Washington was married to Mrs. Martha Custis, of the White House, county of New Kent. This lady, born in the same year with himself, and consequently in the full bloom of youthful womanhood, at twenty-seven, was the widow of a wealthy landed proprietor whose death had occurred three years before. Her maiden name was Dandridge, and she was of Welsh descent. The prudence and gravity of her disposition eminently fitted her to be the wife of Washington. She was her husband's sole executrix, and managed the complicated affairs of the estates which he had left, involving the raising of crops and sale of them in Europe, with ability. Her personal charms, too, in these days of her widowhood, are highly spoken of. The well-known portrait by Woolaston, painted at this period, presents a neat, animated figure, with regular features, dark chestnut hair, and hazel eyes, in a dress which,

changed often in the interval, the whirligig of fashion has restored to the year in which we write, 1860. The story of the courtship is too characteristic to be omitted. The first sight of the lady, at least in her widowhood, by the gallant Colonel, was on one of his military journeyings during the last campaign, just alluded to, of the old French war. He was speeding to the Council at Williamsburg, on a special message, to stir up aid for the camp, when, crossing the ferry over the Pamunkey, a branch of York River, he was waylaid by one of the residents of the region, who compelled him, by the inexorable laws of old Virginia hospitality, to stop for dinner at his mansion. The energetic officer, intent on despatch, was reluctant to yield a moment from his affairs of state, but there was no escape of such a guest from such a host. Within, he found Mrs. Custis, whose attractions reconciled even Washington to delay. He not only stayed to dine, but he passed the night, a charmed guest, with his friendly entertainer. The lady's residence, fortunately, was in the neighborhood of Williamsburg, and a soldier's life requiring a prompt disposition of his opportunities, the Colonel, mindful, perhaps, of the loss of Miss Philipse under similar circumstances, pressed his suit with vigor, and secured the lady at once in the midst of her suitors. He corresponded with her constantly during the remainder of the campaign, and in the month of January, 1759, the wedding took place with great éclat, at the bride's estate at the White House. The honeymoon was the inauguration of a new and pacific era of Washington's hitherto troubled military life.

Yet even this repose proved the introduction to new public duties. With a sense of the obligations befitting a Virginia gentleman, Washington had offered himself to the suffrages of his fellow countrymen at Winchester, and been elected a member of the House of Burgesses. About the time of his marriage, he took his seat, when an incident occurred which has been often narrated. The Speaker, by a vote of the House, having been directed to return thanks to him for his eminent military services, at once performed the duty with warmth and eloquence. Washington rose to express his thanks, but, never voluble before the public, became too embarrassed to utter a syllable. "Sit down, Mr. Washington," was the courteous relief of the gentleman who had addressed him, "your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess." He continued a member of the House, diligently attending to its business till he was called to the work of the Revolution, in this way adding to his experiences in war, familiarity with the practical duties of a legislator and statesman. He was constantly present at the debates, it being "a maxim with him through life," as his biographer, Mr. Sparks, observes—and no one has traced his course more minutely, or is better entitled to offer the remark—"to execute punctually and thoroughly every charge which he undertook."

Duties like these from such a man were a graceful addition to the plan-

ter's life. After a short sojourn at his wife's estate, he carried her to the house at Mount Vernon, which now became a home. Two children of his wife, by her former marriage, a boy and girl, six and four years old, accompanied her. "I am now, I believe," wrote her husband, to a correspondent in London, "fixed at this seat with an agreeable partner for life, and I hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced amidst the wide and bustling world."

The occupations and resources of his life at this period have been fondly detailed by his biographers from the numerous memoranda of his diaries, almanacs, and note-books. The humblest proceedings of farm business and the daily management of his affairs are uncovered before our eyes. We may learn the cares and provision of negro labor on the plantation, and the need of watchfulness in the midst of abundance. "Would any one believe," says he in one of these records of 1768, "that with a hundred and one cows actually reported at a late enumeration of the cattle, I should still be obliged to buy butter for my family?" The very items of his housekeeping and personal apparel may be gathered from his orders to his London correspondents, for in the state of dependence in which the mother country then kept her colonies, it was necessary to procure a coat or a pair of shoes from London. Some of our finely dressed aristocratic ancestors must needs have gone in ill fitting garments. Certainly a fashionable tailor of the present day would scarcely be able to supply an order, without great hazard to his reputation, from such a description as Washington sent of himself, as a man "six feet high and proportionably made; if anything rather slender for a person of that height." It was a convenient thing then to have a particular friend with a foot of the same size as your own, as Washington had in Colonel Beiler, when he availed himself in his directions across the water of that gentleman's last, only "a little wider over the instep." We may trace the paraphernalia of the bride in these orders for Mrs. Washington, in the year of their marriage—the "salmon-colored tabby," and the Brussels lace, and the very playthings for little Miss Martha—"a fashionable dressed doll to cost a guinea," and another for rougher, week-day handling, to cost five shillings; and there is the genteel attire for "Master Custis, eight years old," his "silver laced hat," "neat pumps," and "silver shoe and knee buckles"—vanities moderated by the introduction of "a small Bible neatly bound in Turkey, and John Parke Custis wrote in gilt letters on the inside of the cover," with a prayer book to match. Here, too, in the same familiar handwriting of Washington, is an order for several busts for the decoration of the family mansion, now assuming proportions worthy the new alliance which had brought lands and money to its owner's fortunes—"one of Alexander the Great; another of Julius Cæsar; another of Charles XII., of Sweden, and a fourth, of the King of Prussia." A good selection for a soldier who had looked upon the realities of military life. We shall by

and by see that same King of Prussia, the great Frederick, sending a portrait of himself with the message, "From the oldest general in Europe to the greatest general in the world."

The daily life of the gentleman planter is all the while going on, the crops of wheat and tobacco getting in, which were to be embarked beneath his eye on the broad bosom of the Potomac on their voyage to England and the West Indies. So well established was his repute as a producer, that a barrel of flour bearing his brand was exempted from inspection in the ports of the latter country. Cordial hospitality was going on within doors, and wholesome country sports without. He had hounds for the fox hunt; there were deer to be killed in his woods, abundant wild fowl on his meadows in the season and fisheries in the river at his feet: and that there might be no falling into rusticity, came the annual state visits, when he was accompanied by Mrs. Washington, to the notable picked society at the capitals, Williamsburg and Annapolis. It was a hearty, generous life, fitted to breed manly thoughts and good resolution against the coming time, when the share shall be again exchanged for the sword, and the humble argument of the vestry at the little church at Pohick, where good, eccentric Parson Weems, inculcated his moralities, for the louder controversy of national debate. In fine, look upon Washington at this or any other period of his life, we ever find him industrious, always useful; his activity and influence radiating from the centre of domestic life, and his private virtue, to the largest interests of the world.

Fifteen years had been thus passed at Mount Vernon, when the peace of provincial life began to be ruffled by a new agitation. France had formerly furnished the stirring theme of opposition and resistance when America poured out her best blood at the call of British statesmen, and helped to restore the falling greatness of England. That same Parliament which had been so wonderfully revived when America seconded the call of Chatham, was now to inflict an insupportable wound upon her defenders. The seeds of the Revolution must be looked for in the previous war with France. There and then America became acquainted with her own powers, and the strength and weakness of British soldiers and placemen. To no one had the lesson been better taught than to Washington. By no one was it studied with more impartiality. There was no faction in his opposition. The traditions of his family, his friends, the provinces, were all in favor of allegiance to the British government. He had nothing in his composition of the disorganizing mind of a mere political agitator, a breeder of discontent. The interests of his large landed estates, and a revenue dependent upon exports, bound him to the British nation. But there was one principle in his nature stronger in its influence than all these material ties—the love of justice; and when Patrick Henry rose in the House of Burgesses, with his eloquent assertion of the rights of the colony in the matter of taxation, Washington was there in his seat to respond to the sentiment.

To this memorable occasion, on the 29th May, 1765, has been referred the birth of that patriotic fervor in the mind of Washington, welcoming as it was developed a new order of things, which never rested till the liberties of the country were established on the firmest foundations of independence and civil order. "His correspondence," says Irving, writing of this incident, "hitherto had not turned on political or speculative themes; being engrossed by either military or agricultural matters, and evincing little anticipation of the vortex of public duties into which he was about to be drawn. All his previous conduct and writings show a loyal devotion to the crown, with a patriotic attachment to his country. It is probable that, on the present occasion, that latent patriotism received its first electric shock." Be this as it may, he was certainly from the beginning an earnest supporter of the constitutional liberties of his country, and met every fresh aggression of Parliament as it arose, in the most resolute manner. He took part in the local Virginia resolutions, and on the meeting of the first Congress, in Philadelphia, went up to that honored body with Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton. He was at this time a firm, unyielding maintainer of the rights in controversy, and fully prepared for any issue which might grow out of them; but he was no revolutionist—for it was not in the nature of his mind to consider a demand for justice a provocative to war. Again, in Virginia, after the adjournment of Congress, in the important Convention at Richmond, he listens to the impetuous eloquence of Patrick Henry. It was this body which set on foot a popular military organization in the colony, and Washington, who had previously given his aid to the independent companies, was a member of the Committee to report the plan. A few days later, he writes to his brother, John Augustine, who was employed in training a company, that he would "very cheerfully accept the honor of commanding it, if occasion require it to be drawn out."

The second Continental Congress, of which Washington was also a member, met at Philadelphia in May, 1775, its members gathering to the deliberations with throbbing hearts, the musketry of Lexington ringing in their ears. The overtures of war by the British troops in Massachusetts had gathered a little provincial army about Boston; a national organization was a measure no longer of choice, but of necessity. A Commander-in-Chief was to be appointed, and though the selection was not altogether free from local jealousies, the superior merit of Washington was seconded by the superior patriotism of the Congress, and on the fifteenth of June he was unanimously elected by ballot to the high position. His modesty in accepting the office was as noticeable as his fitness for it. He was not the man to flinch from any duty, because it was hazardous; but it is worth knowing, that we may form a due estimate of his character, that he felt to the quick the full force of the sacrifices of ease and happiness that he was making, and the new difficulties he was inevitably to encounter. He

was so impressed with the probabilities of failure, and so little disposed to vaunt his own powers, that he begged gentlemen in the House to remember, "lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to his reputation," that he thought himself, "with the utmost sincerity, unequal to the command he was honored with." With a manly spirit of patriotic independence, worthy the highest eulogy, he declared his intention to keep an exact account of his public expenses, and accept nothing more for his services—a resolution which was faithfully kept to the letter. With these disinterested preliminaries, he proceeded to Cambridge, and took command of the army on the third of July. Bunker Hill had been fought, establishing the valor of the native militia, and the leaguer of Boston was already formed, though with inadequate forces. There was excellent individual material in the men, but everything was to be done for their organization and equipment. Above all, there was an absolute want of powder. It was impossible to make any serious attempt upon the British in Boston, but the utmost heroism was shown in cutting off their resources and hemming them in. Humble as were these inefficient means in the present, the prospect of the future was darkened by the short enlistments of the army, which were made only for the year, Congress expecting in that time a favorable answer to their second Petition to the King. The new recruits came in slowly, and means were feebly supplied, but Washington, bent on action, determined upon an attack. For this purpose, he took possession of and fortified Dorchester Heights, and prepared to assail the town. The British were making an attempt to dislodge him, which was deferred by a storm; and General Howe, having already resolved to evacuate the city, a few days after, on the 17th of March, ingloriously sailed away with his troops to Halifax. The next day, Washington entered the town in triumph. Thus ended the first epoch of his Revolutionary campaigns. There had been little opportunity for brilliant action, but great difficulties had been overcome with a more honorable persistence, and a substantial benefit had been gained. The full extent of the services of Washington became known only to his posterity, since it was absolutely necessary at the time to conceal the difficulties under which he labored; but the country saw and felt enough to extol his fame and award him an honest meed of gratitude. A special vote of Congress gave expression to the sentiment, and a gold medal, bearing the head of Washington, and on the reverse the legend *Hostibus primo fugatis*, was ordered by that body to commemorate the event.

We must now follow the commander rapidly to another scene of operations, remembering that any detailed notice, however brief, of Washington's military operations during the war, would expand this biographical sketch into a historical volume. New York was evidently to be the next object of attack, and thither Washington gathered his forces, and made every available means of defence on land. By the beginning

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